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VOLUME 3, EDITION 11

wethersfield LIFE

Showing her skills

Young athlete aims high
in gymnastics competitions

See story on page 37



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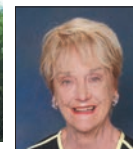
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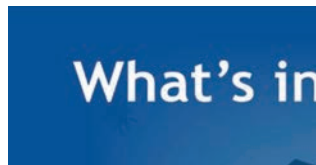
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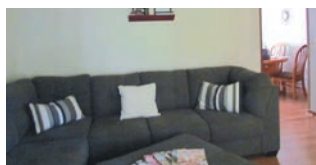
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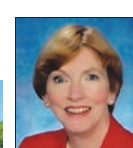
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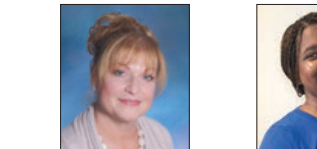
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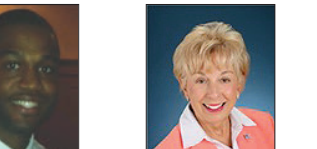
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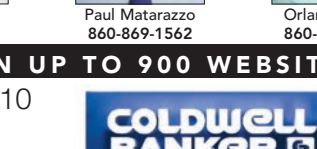
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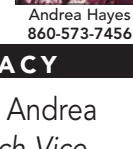
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QUOTE OF NOTE:

“First and foremost, it’s always about the kids.”

— Pauline Greer

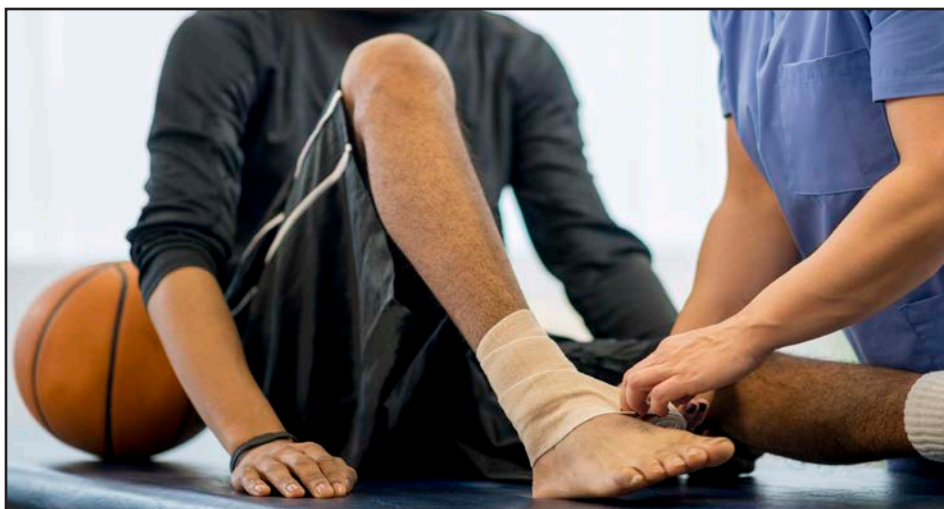
See story page 9

ON THE COVER

Adele Hong, 13, of Wethersfield, trains every day at the American Gymnastics Training Center in Southington.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
See story page 37

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Photos by Lisa Brisson



1. Vendor Ginger Smith of Wethersfield is a familiar sight at the weekly market. Her homemade jams and jellies are a hit, and all of the proceeds go to benefit the Copprome Orphanage in Honduras.

2. Organic and conventionally grown fruits and vegetables are just some of the stars of the Wethersfield Farmers Market. Also for sale are local honey products, jewelry and crafts, magic games, fresh apple cider and raised sugar doughnuts, breads and pies, pasture-raised meats and much more.

3. Nicholas Giuliano, 7, was crowned the pie king as he won the junior division of the pie-eating contest.

Nine years and growing

Wethersfield Farmers Market stays fresh by always looking to improve

by Mark Jahne
Editor

The newness may have worn off, but crowds are still flocking to the weekly Wethersfield Farmers Market at the intersection of Hartford Avenue and State Street.

Market Masters Doug Sacks and Stephanie Jarm are pleased, but not surprised. They tweak things a little bit every season to add more appeal to the Thursday afternoon attraction.

"This is our ninth year. This year we've partnered with the Mom's Club in Wethersfield and we're doing monthly events" in conjunction with that group, Jarm said.

"We're trying to cater to the families of Wethersfield. There are a lot of young moms in the community now," she added.

"They approached us and asked us for more ideas," Laurie Kelley said. "When the farm market opened we

did flower painting."

She is immediate past president of the Mom's Club of Wethersfield. Upcoming club/market productions include NoRA Cupcake Day decorate your own on Aug. 24 and pumpkin painting on Oct. 5.

beef, pork, cheese, baked goods, lemon ice, goat milk cosmetics, doughnuts, honey, pottery and jewelry.

Jarm said they have achieved a good mix of vendors, some who have become staples of the market and others newer to this event. More

grounds of the Solomon-Welles House to the Webb Barn behind the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum.

Sacks is just as pleased as Jarm. "We hoped it would [be another successful season]. We listen to the people who come here and they tell us what they want," he said. "We've seen a big difference."

The energy is high and the market now has more than 4,000 likes on Facebook, Sacks said. The market received a modest grant from the state Department of Agriculture to use for marketing and updated signs.

"Every week we have new vendors who want to come into the market," he added.

They cannot always get in because Sacks and Jarm want to make sure that there are no duplicate vendors or identical products being sold. The idea is to offer as wide a variety as possible within the available space. **WL**

"We listen to the people who come here and they tell us what they want."

– Doug Sacks

On this particular day the special activities included a pie-eating contest, scavenger hunt and flower-pot decorating. There was also a fire truck that children could climb on. One could also find face painting, henna and chiropractic services on site.

Items for sale included fresh fruits and vegetables, pies, jelly, jam, organic smoothies, flowers, bread, pet treats,

music and food trucks are on hand this year.

"We always like to give new food a chance," she said.

This year's market opened May 16 and will continue into October. She said it got off to a great start and maintained that energy through the following weeks. One change this year is that the annual Farm to Table dinner will be moved from the

Retired, but not finished

Nurses celebrate 75 years of health care and outreach

For the past 75 years, an organization in Rocky Hill and Wethersfield has quietly been doing its part to improve the community. The Wethersfield/Rocky Hill Professional Nurses Association, originally known as the Graduate Nurses Association, formed two months prior the start of America's involvement in World War II.

"A group of Wethersfield nurses organized as part of the war effort," Pat Rinaldi said. "At the time, there were similar organizations in the surrounding towns. We are the only one that has still survived, as far as I know."

She is the group's president and a

member for 23 years.

What began with 35 nurses signing their own charter quickly expanded to upwards of 80, especially after Rocky Hill was included in the organization a year after its inception. In the years since, membership has fluctuated, but the group now has more than 50 members, many of which have been part of the association for decades.

All are current or former registered nurses. While it started as a way to help the war effort, the Professional Nurses Association has evolved over the years.

"We've always been community based," Rinaldi said. "Our basic purpose from day one has been to provide services to the community."

One of the largest and longest-running ways that the group gives back is by providing flu shots and immunizations, now in partnership with the Central Connecticut Health District. They immunized

Photo by Allie Rivera

October 8, 1941

A meeting of the graduate nurses of Wethersfield was held at 8:00 p.m., on October 8, 1941 in the Charles Wright School.

Mrs. Charles W. Crankshaw, Chairman of the Health and Medical Committee of the Wethersfield Defense Committee arranged for the meeting.

Following a group of songs, accompanied by Mrs. Vera Johnson, Mrs. Crankshaw stated that the organized strength of the graduate nurses would be a great help to the community in the months to come, especially if and when a crisis arises. The sense of the meeting seemed to be that a graduate nurses association should be formed in Wethersfield.

Discussion followed. Mrs. Gilbert Ashley suggested that the organization be put on a larger scale than defense work may call for and make the motion that such an association be formed. The motion was carried.

A committee of one, Miss Elizabeth Holmes was appointed by the chair to bring in a report on the question of Constitution.

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Pat Rinaldi framed the original hand-written minutes from what would become the Wethersfield/Rocky Hill Professional Nurses Association, dated Oct. 8, 1941. The group recognized its 75th anniversary this past October and continues its philanthropic work.



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8,000 local residents in 1977.

"Now you can get them at any CVS or doctor, but it was only us back then," 54-year member Jean Jagel said.

Members providing these services have current licensures and are assisted by doctors. Over the years, the scope of the immunizations has also expanded. In 2009, the group provided more than 7,000 immunizations for the H1N1 flu for residents as young as 6 months.

The organization will also provide homebound vaccinations and in 2015 conducted its first school-based flu clinic at Webb School. Another of its longtime endeavors is medical equipment rental.

"We run a free medical equipment loan program through the town of Wethersfield," Rinaldi said. "It goes all the way back to 1945 when we purchased a wheelchair for the town of Wethersfield."

In 1969, the group started its equipment fund, growing its rental capabilities from three pieces to hundreds.

"We have quite a relationship with occupational therapists and physical therapists in the area now. They'll call us directly," Betty Ann Fusco, a 29-year member, said.

Members said this project would not be possible without the support of town government.

"Wethersfield gave us a certain space in the basement of the nature center so we could lend out bigger things," Jagel said.

The piece that they consider to be the most important part of the organization is its yearly scholarship for students studying nursing, another element that has been part of the association for decades.

"The first scholarship was given in 1949 for \$100," Rinaldi said.

"That was a lot of money back then," Fusco added.

Since that first award the association has provided 187 scholarships totaling nearly \$81,000.

It was initially awarded to a graduating high school senior who planned to study nursing. Now it is granted to college students entering their last year or last semester of a nursing program.

"What's wonderful is that it's all ages of people," 11-year member Betty Ann Kerrigan said. "It's really always a delight because they're so enthusiastic. By that time in their

schooling, they know this is a calling and it's what they really want to do."

Many of the members who said they attended nursing school a long time ago love getting to see what their scholarship recipients are able to do with their education.

"They have so many opportunities now that we didn't have when we started," Rinaldi said. "A lot of times they'll come back and tell us what they're doing."

Along with supporting the education of future nurses, the group is also interested in continuing its own education. They frequently bring in guest lecturers to keep them current on trends in the medical field or provide interesting viewpoints they may not have otherwise experienced.

"We've had a nurse who served in Vietnam who came and spoke to us. We had someone come and talk to us about what not to do after a knee surgery," Kerrigan said.

"Even though I'm not actively practicing in pediatrics, I'm still interested in learning about what's going on, and this gives me the opportunity."

The first hour of each meeting is dedicated to education, and the group typically provides a donation in the guest speaker's honor to the charity of his or her choice.

These nurses are constantly looking for new ways to give back. Past events include donations to the local food bank and making handkerchiefs for cancer patients and they are also always looking for new ways to raise funds for their efforts.

In recent years they've held garden events, designed and sold their own cookbook, had movie premieres and sold plants.

"We had a couple of tag sales, which always ended up being on the hottest day of the year," Kerrigan said with a laugh. "We're always looking for new ways to raise money."

With 75 years behind them, members are proud of all they have been able to accomplish and glad to see that the association is continuing. This past year saw six new members join.

"It's so worthwhile," Rinaldi said.

"I want to do everything I can to keep the organization going because it has such a rich history." **WL**

Off to West Point

Taylor Bradley signs up to serve her country

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Taylor Bradley is not unlike other teenage girls. She enjoys Starbucks, cell phones and many other things that are popular in modern life.

But when it came time to select a college she decided that she wanted something more than a top-quality education. She also wanted to make a difference by serving her country.

At a time when her friends are in the middle of enjoying trips to the beach and everything else summer has to offer Bradley, 18, a member of the WHS Class of 2017, is busy sweating her way through boot camp at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. She has been there since July 2 for two months of indoctrination and physical training.

Boot camp ends Aug. 19 and classes begin soon afterward. Bradley was quietly confident that she could handle the challenge when she spoke with Wethersfield LIFE two days before leaving home.

"I went to ROTC summer camp at Norwich University in Vermont the past few summers," she said.

Upon completion of her undergraduate degree she will be commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. Bradley said she might be the first WHS graduate to attend West Point; she's almost certainly the first WHS female.

Military academies are highly selective in their admissions policies. They want excellent students who are physically fit and demonstrate maturity and potential leadership qualities.

A student must be sponsored by a federal legislator for consideration

of acceptance and she received the nod from both U.S. Rep. John Larson and U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal.

"I was a pretty good student," Bradley said.

Her physical fitness comes from participating in multiple sports. She played field hockey and lacrosse and also ran indoor and outdoor track during her time at Wethersfield High. She was also a member of the wrestling team.

"I was the only girl on the team," she said.

All of her opponents were boys. She shrugged that off and said that growing up with older brother Trevor helped her learn how to deal with boys. Her most difficult opponent wasn't the biggest or the strongest, but rather the quickest on his feet.

Bradley said West Point and the other military academies are not on the radar of most high school stu-



Photo by Mark Jahne

Taylor Bradley, a 2017 graduate of Wethersfield High School, is now enrolled at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

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dents. It was somewhat different for her because of a family history of military service.

"I didn't know much about it until sophomore year. My grandfather was a lieutenant colonel in the Army during World War II," she said.

Her other grandfather, as well as her cousin, Amy, both served in the U.S. Air Force. So she started by looking at colleges that offered ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corps) programs. That led to a review of the U.S. Military Academy and she made the decision to submit her application.

"West Point is the ideal place to go," she said. "The leadership skills, you can't find those anywhere else. I didn't look at any other branches [of the military] other than the Army. I think that service in general is really important."

In addition to already being a highly trained athlete, her summers at Norwich University offered some insight into the training regime she now endures. Bradley also has had some experience with firearms, having shot an M-16 simulator.

Another benefit is the fact that she is an early riser. West Point cadets are awoken at the crack of dawn and must immediately perform physical training. The academy has a reputation for teaching extraordinary time management skills and she looks forward to that.

Perhaps the most difficult adjustment will be the loss of her cell phone during boot camp.

"We get them back at the end of the summer," she said hopefully.

Her family will be allowed to visit the majestic campus situated on a cliff overlooking the Hudson River. She will enjoy occasional vacations, just like other college students.

Bradley said a few of her classmates have enlisted in the military but the number is small even though armed forces recruiters visit the high school for career days and other events.

Because admissions comes with a commitment to serve in uniform her college years will be paid for by the federal government. She will then be required to serve five years

of active duty and another three in the reserves.

Every cadet is required to participate in at least one sport or athletic activity, she said. Bradley isn't worried about having any gender-related problems at the academy. Women have been a part of the corps of cadets for many years.

"This year is the highest year ever for the number of women," she said.

There are more than 300 females in her class and that represents 25 percent of the total freshman enrollment. She already knows what she wants to do with her education and military career.

Life will be different in that she will be one member of a class in which all members were top students, top athletes and standouts in other areas of their lives, including volunteer service. She is a member of the National Honor Society and was president of the WHS chapter of the French National Honor Society.

"Everyone is coming from high rankings in their classes. I used to work a lot with the [Connecticut]

Humane Society," she said.

Bradley also coached youth field hockey and lacrosse. She attended Girls State, a program sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary and held at Eastern Connecticut State University.

"I'm more of a math and science person. I want to major in cyber security ... it's going to be really important in the coming years," she said.

Her parents Kendall and Kelly were not surprised with their daughter's choice once they reflected upon her thought process and how much she studied and learned from her grandfather over the years.

"She just saw how he did everything differently," Kelly said. "She's a critical thinker, independent thinker. She's future focused."

"That's the thing we always were impressed with," Kendall said. "Her perseverance is amazing."

Both parents agreed that it was only about a year and a half ago when their daughter first brought up the idea of attending college at West Point and serving in the Army. **WL**

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LIFE

in the classroom

Two new elementary school principals take over at Hanmer and Highcrest

by Mark Jahne
Editor

The principals' chairs at Hanmer and Highcrest elementary schools were empty, but not for long. Both schools now have new leaders who started on the job in early July.

Siobhan O'Connor is the newly appointed principal at Highcrest, the town's largest elementary school in terms of student population, with an enrollment of more than 430. Pauline Greer returns to town to take charge at Hanmer in Old Wethersfield.

O'Connor was a high school social studies teacher in Bloomfield and Windsor before becoming dean

of students and facilitator of alternative education at Windsor High School. She and her family live in Windsor, where she grew up, and are in the process of building a new home in Suffield.

She has 17 years of experience as a professional educator and served as a middle school assistant principal and elementary school principal in the Norwich Public Schools. That experience helped with her own

family life.

"It was really a perfect time for me. My children were at that exact age," she said of the latter position.

O'Connor firmly believes that elementary school helps prepare children for future success in both academics and life. She is a distant relative of Irish author James Joyce and met his family on a trip to the Emerald Isle.

She is confident that

Wethersfield will be a perfect fit.

"I was looking for a community that valued education but also valued the continuous growth model. I'm always looking for some place where I can make a difference," she said.

"I really want to go in and just listen. They have a very active leadership team here."

That's fine with her because she likes the concept of shared leadership.

She was impressed by what she called a rigorous interview process and looks forward to moving Highcrest in a positive direction. O'Connor replaces John Bean, who lost his job after he was arrested for

**"First and foremost,
it's always about the kids."**

– Pauline Greer

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Pauline Greer replaces recently retired Margaret Zacchei as principal of Hanmer School.



Siobhan O'Connor is the new principal at Highcrest School.

alleged personal misconduct at a Hartford department store.

The new principal said she has already learned that Highcrest has a family atmosphere and she wants to see faculty, staff, students and parents work together to make the school the best it can be. She's also relieved that she won't have to live under the pressure of what she called a constant budget crisis in Norwich.

The office staff, which like the principal works throughout the summer, has already helped her enjoy a smooth transition into her new post. Her first order of business is to determine what things need to be tweaked and improved.

Unlike O'Connor, Pauline Greer is not new to town. She worked here in the past and decided to return when offered the opportunity to become principal at Hanmer. She

replaces Margaret Zacchei, who retired at the end of June.

Greer was a sixth grade teacher at Webb School as well as curriculum specialist for the Wethersfield Public Schools before she took the assistant principal's position at Griswold Elementary School in Berlin. Now she's back.

"I came to Wethersfield when Webb opened" as an elementary school, she said.

Greer has more than 20 years of experience in public education. The Bloomfield High School graduate earned a degree in English literature at the University of Connecticut.

"Then I lived in Europe for a little while," she said.

Upon her return she continued her education, earning a master's degree in elementary education from the University of Hartford and a

sixth-year certificate in administration from Central Connecticut State University.

There are no other educators in her family. She settled on her future career while living abroad and discovered that she enjoyed working with children.

"My first teaching job was in Glastonbury at Hebron Avenue School," Greer said.

She has also taught in the Windsor and West Hartford school districts. Her prior experience in Wethersfield meant she had some familiarity with Hanmer before being selected to replace Zacchei.

"I knew a lot of people in the building. I thought it would be a good fit," she said. "I'm excited to be a facilitator. I've already started meeting with the staff. First and foremost, it's always about the kids."

She hopes to engage the students in making a difference in their school and the greater world. Greer is acutely aware of how much public education has changed since she was a child.

The emphasis now is not as much on memorization as it is on critical thinking, problem solving and application of what has been learned. Children also need to learn about safe Internet use and personal accountability.

Greer said she sees no reason to make any significant changes to how the school is run. One of her challenges will be to strike the right balance when it comes to dealing with the various tests and mandates.

"We are trying to figure out how to best educate students in a different world. We have to prepare our kids to work together," she said. **WL**

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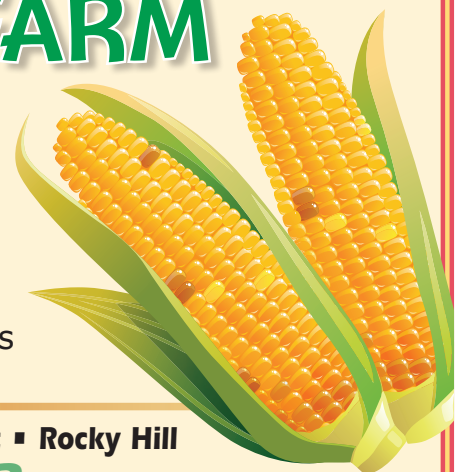
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Linda Papertsian, Stephen Jacobsen and Kirsten Trumbull, from left, traveled to Orlando, Fla., for training to become Stephen Leaders at the Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church. Stephen Ministry is in congregations around the world, offering care to people going through a difficult time.

Continuing to care

Evangelical church extends its Stephen Ministry

by Allie Rivera
 Staff Writer

In the cold days of January, three members of the Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church on Maple Street traveled to sunny Florida. While the weather was beautiful, the trio had little time for relaxation. They were on a mission.

"Every day we would walk by the pool and just kind of wave at it," Linda Papertsian said with a laugh.

Papertsian, Kirsten Trumbull and Stephen Jacobsen were attending a week-long training session to become leaders in Stephen Ministry, an international organization that trains members of various denominations to provide care for those going through a difficult time.

"It is a ministry that is a lay ministry," Stephen Leader Judi Briggaman said. "It is lay people walking one on one with people who are having struggles in their lives."

Care receivers, or people who seek out and work with a Stephen Minister, are typically people going through a struggle such as facing the death of a loved one, divorce, or the loss of a job.

"We're not therapists, we're not pastors. We've been trained to know when a professional needs to be involved," Papertsian said.

"For me, I'm not setting goals for you. I'm walking beside you. The goal is to listen, not to fix anybody."

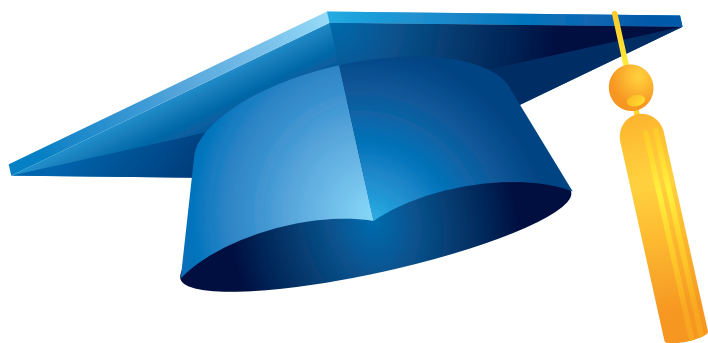
Stephen Ministry has spread across the United States and 29 other countries since it started in 1975, serving more than 170 Christian denominations in more than 12,000 congregations.

The history of this organization at the Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church dates back 13 years when church members Briggaman and Audrey Jensen and Senior Pastor Dr. Scott Solberg discussed bringing Stephen Ministry into the congregation. Shortly thereafter, member Ray Gratton joined the effort.

"The pastor has to deal with so much already," Jacobsen said. "This allows people to talk to us and it helps to give them a little bit of a break. It feels good to support these people and be there for them."

The process of becoming a Stephen Minister includes 50 hours

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of training as well as twice monthly peer review sessions.

"Not just anybody who wants to be a Stephen Minister can just come and tap us on the shoulder and start," Briggaman said. "There is an application, a panel interview, a lot goes into it."

Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church has trained 35 Stephen Ministers who have provided services to nearly 100 care receivers. They meet twice monthly to check in on one another's progress.

"It's all anonymous, Briggaman said. "That peer review group is so critical to the success of the program."

Stephen Ministers sign up for a two-year commitment but after that time they are able to stay on longer if they so desire.

"Everything is handled carefully and is done with a lot of thought behind it," Papertsian said. "We're really committed to this. We've signed covenants with one another."

Briggaman clarified that the role of a Stephen Minister is one of guidance and compassion. Care receivers

"Everything is handled carefully and is done with a lot of thought behind it."

– Linda Papertsian

who are interested in working with a Stephen Minister are paired by gender and need, then are given the outline of the program.

"We clarify what's acceptable," she said. "We're not here to babysit your kids or anything like that."

The next step above being a Stephen Minister is being a Stephen Leader. Briggaman and Gratton serve as the two Stephen Leaders at their church, but with their recent trip to Florida for the organization's 200th Stephen Series Leader's Training Course, Papertsian, Trumbull and Jacobsen have joined their ranks.

"I am retiring and that's why we've brought in these guys," Briggaman said.

For Papertsian, the idea to become a Stephen Leader stemmed directly from her appreciation for the organization and its mission, as well as her faith.

"I liked that it was a ministry of

the church. There's the assumption that there's prayer behind me," she said. "We are the caregivers, but God is the cure giver."

Papertsian also appreciates that Stephen Ministry is not only for members of the congregation, but will serve anyone who needs care.

"We minister to people who have faith and people who don't have faith," she said. "We accept people where they are."

The training in Orlando brought together Stephen Ministers from congregations as far away as Singapore.

"There were Christian churches from all denominations from all across the country," Papertsian said. "It was inspiring because we all had the same mission to do this for our congregations."

The course was comprised of 50 hours of training in a classroom setting over a five-day period including

a great deal of role-playing exercises.

"What we were practicing was what Stephen Ministers do, but through the lens of a Stephen Leader," Jacobsen said.

The three new leaders are now also able to train new Stephen Ministers within their own congregation to provide care to more people. New ministers are generally trained every other year from January through May.

"We try to train six to eight new people each time," Briggaman said.

With three new Stephen Leaders at the church, those who are part of this effort at Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church hope to be able to provide more support, not only to their fellow church members, but to others throughout the community.

"Having a Stephen Minister is saying you don't have to do it alone," Papertsian said. "I'm not going to give you Christian care giving. I'm going to give you care giving as a Christian." **WL**

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by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

In a small storefront off the Silas Deane Highway now sits Periwinkles Gift Shop, its cement walls painted a pale blue and stained wooden shelves sitting on opposite walls.

Getting to this point was a long journey for owner Donna Brody that began nearly two decades ago and started only a few hundred feet from her current location at the former Pelton's Drug Store. Now a Rite Aid pharmacy, Pelton's was owned by Brody's stepfather Gerry Weitzman until he and her mother, Esther, died in a car crash in 1999.

"I worked there for over 20 years," Brody said, looking out the storefront window. "I worked there for so long and now I look at it every day."

Brody's journey to owning a gift shop began in that Pelton's location when she got a job in the family business.

"When I was 16 or 17 I started working there," she recalled. "I said, 'we should have gifts,' so they gave me one shelf. Well, one shelf turned into a whole department."

Brody quickly fell in love with her gift department and began devoting all of her time and energy to making it a high-quality boutique.

"People still talk about it," she said. "It made me feel really good that people still remembered."

Following the accident, she changed the name of her department to Forever Mom, in remembrance of her mother. Brody kept her list of potential clients, thinking she would be able to open her own gift shop soon after, but that did not happen.

Everything started to change this past October when she learned that Scott's Music Center was clos-

ing after a long run in the shopping plaza near the intersection of Wells Road. Her boyfriend contacted the building's landlord to see if the space would be available and, after many months of calling back and forth, Brody rented the space on April 1.

"It was just perfect for me. It's the exact size I wanted," she said. "I wanted to get back to waking up and wanting to go to work."

She added that the location's close proximity to the former Pelton's was also a large factor in her decision. She was holding out specifically for a space close to the store that had meant so much to her.

With the help of her boyfriend, family and friends, she quickly transformed the small space by painting the walls and ceilings, building a checkout counter and decorating a variety of wood tables and pallets to display her items.

"I want people to walk in and say, wow, this place is really cool," Brody said.

"It's really a passion of Donna's to do something like this," friend Sandra Stavola said. "I'd love to see her grow and be successful there."

Brody hopes to offer a wide range of unique gifts. She carries the Capri Blue lines of candles and hand creams as well as colorful umbrellas on display and Wethersfield-themed glasses and trinkets.

"I'm trying to go for different. I want things that other people don't have," she said.

She hopes to be able to offer an even wider array of items than she did at Pelton's.

"Back then, because it was a drug store, it was hard to get people to sell to me," she said. "If you want me to get you something,



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"It's unique stuff that you won't find anywhere else," Stavola said. "I'm a lifetime resident of Wethersfield and I like to support local businesses like this."

Brody also said that by being a small businesswoman she is able to offer greater customer service than a large chain store and a better shopping experience than those looking for items online.

"We have great customer service. You have to treat people the way you want to be treated," she said. "It's different when you can walk into a store and touch it and actually talk to a store owner."

She is excited to offer this new shopping experience to local residents and hopes that people will check out her store.

"This is what I love to do," she said. "I think that this happened for a reason and I'm glad that it all worked out." **WL**

Periwinkles Gift Shop is located at 669-C Silas Deane Highway. It can be reached at 860-558-8883.



Donna Brody, owner of the new Periwinkles Gift Shop, transformed her storefront into a colorful shop in less than a month with the help of friends and family.

Photo by Allie Rivera

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Presenting the funds



The second annual Mayor's Charity Ball raised \$25,000 that was donated to town social and youth services. It is targeted to helping feed hungry children and senior citizens as well as support for an early childhood education scholarship fund. This is \$9,000 more than was raised at the first ball.



Photos by Mark Jahne

Friends Allie Lesser, in striped dress, and Nora Magel did their own fundraiser with a lemonade stand. The girls presents the proceeds to Assistant Director Erica Teixeira, left, and Director Kathy Bagley of social and youth services.

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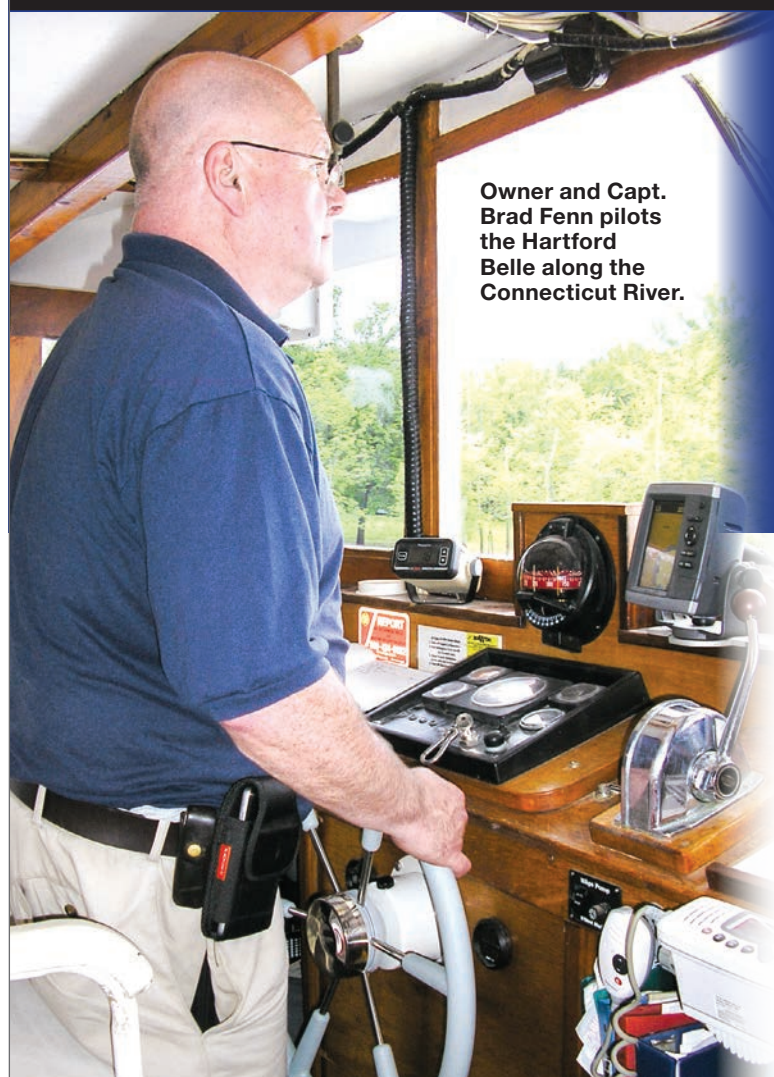


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Owner and Capt. Brad Fenn pilots the Hartford Belle along the Connecticut River.



The Hartford Belle is a 47-foot trawler that will soon begin regular service out of Wethersfield Cove.



Chris Traczyk, chairman of the town Tourism Commission, conducts a meeting while afloat.

Photos by Mark Jahne

Cruising the cove

Boat cruises: A regular attraction on historic waterway

by Mark Jahne
Editor

The Wethersfield Cove is a place where people can launch boats and enjoy some fishing or just watch the shore birds. Now it is a destination for recreational cruises as well.

The Hartford Belle will soon begin making regular appearances in the cove

for TGIF cocktail parties and chartered events. Town officials are delighted to add this additional attraction to everything else that attracts visitors to seek out Connecticut's most ancient town.

The town's Tourism Commission decided to hold its monthly meeting on the water the evening of May 30. Commission

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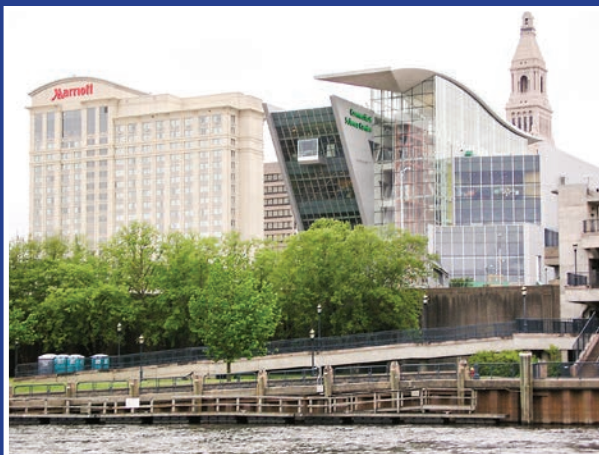
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Downtown Hartford as viewed from the river.



Riverfront Plaza in Hartford as seen from the deck of the Hartford Belle.

members and other guests boarded the boat and set off for a leisurely 90-minute ride along the Connecticut River to Hartford and back.

The Heirloom Market at Comstock Ferre provided complimentary dinner and soft drinks.

Owner and Capt. Brad Fenn of Newington berths his vessel at Riverfront Plaza in the city. He was drawn to the cove, in part, because of the new dock that fits better with larger craft.

"We tried it with the new dock system to check it out," Peter Gillespie said.

He is the town's director of planning and economic development. The boat can carry as many as 49 people and features a bar and a covered area where food can be served.

"We have talked for years about the fact that we have this wonderful natural resource," commission Chairman Chris Traczyk said of the cove.

She firmly believes that efforts should be made to promote it as a destination and encourage more use of the iconic waterway.

"It's an added feature. It really is an opportunity for us to show people another side of Wethersfield," Traczyk said.

She said not only the new dock, but dredging the channel to make it passable for larger boats, were instrumental in drawing Fenn's attention to the cove.

The boat slid gently along as the sun slowly began to set. Waterfowl flew by and the Trinity College crew teams

were gliding across the river's surface in their racing shells.

Those aboard remarked on how common landmarks looked different when seen from the river rather than the shore. That seemed particularly true of the Hartford skyline.

The Hartford Belle is a reproduction trawler that was built in 1992 in Albany, N.Y. It is 47 feet from stem to stern.

"This is our 11th season," Fenn said. "We're going to offer charters out of the cove."

He's also planning to launch thank goodness it's Friday cocktail cruises. Reservations and additional information are available at hartfordbelle.com.

Tickets are priced at \$22 for adults and \$21 for senior citizens. Children will receive a discount. **WL**



Hartford's underground Park River empties into the Connecticut River just south of downtown.



This is what the entrance to Wethersfield Cove looks like from the river.



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A world of difference

Newly hired officer compares police work in Hartford vs. Wethersfield



by Mark Jahne
Editor

Officer Rich Holton is no stranger to law enforcement. He has worked in the field for more than 21 years, until recently exclusively in Hartford.

Holton, who had attained the rank of sergeant, retired and decided to come to Wethersfield and join the police department here. He's back at the bottom of the seniority list and working the overnight shift just like any new hire.

That's OK with him. He wanted to keep working and doing a job he finds fulfilling. Besides, how different could it be to cross the invisible dotted line into a suburb that borders the city?

The answer is much different than he expected. Holton spoke about the changes one recent night while working the midnight shift

patrolling the Berlin Turnpike and northern end of town.

Also out that night was James Buyak, a former HPD captain who retired and joined WPD at the same time as Holton. Buyak was wrapping up his integration into his new department with a field-training officer.

"Sometimes it's in the blood" Holton said when asked why he wants to continue working as a street cop.

"My old beat was the North End of Hartford, Albany Avenue. There were nights when you never got a meal break," he said.

He also had a walking beat in the notorious Stowe Village housing project, since torn down.

Phones constantly ring in the dispatch center at Hartford police headquarters. Calls for service are prioritized and anything that does not require immediate attention is backlogged and dealt with if and

when things slow down.

It's not uncommon for 30 or more calls to be backlogged at the end of a shift. That simply does not happen in the suburbs where the call volume is substantially lower and officers are usually able to respond to any kind of call within a matter of minutes.

That's the expectation of both the police and the citizens and businesses. Anything less would cause a fuss. In the city, "quality of life" calls are sometimes left hanging for hours, or even days, out of necessity.

Holton can't get over the change when one crosses the border into Wethersfield. The volume of serious crime is significantly lower. People are, for the most part, respectful when stopped for a traffic violation.

As an example, he pulled over a car on the turnpike that had a broken headlight. The driver immediately stuck two empty hands out the window, suggesting he has prior experience with being stopped, and

wanted Holton to see that he was not holding a weapon.

The matter was settled in just a few minutes with a verbal warning to have the headlight repaired. The man shook Holton's hand and thanked him for behaving in a professional and respectful manner.

He rarely got that kind of feedback in Hartford.

As he continued his patrol he could see the light atop the Travelers tower from the turnpike. He spoke again about how police work in this town versus the capital city is like night and day.

"I'm amazed. It's like there's an invisible shield between Wethersfield and Hartford," he said. "It was definitely an adjustment coming from Hartford to here."

Holton said there are many good people in the city but there is also an element that mistrusts and clashes with law enforcement.

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Officer Rich Holton checks motor vehicle data on the laptop computer in his patrol car.

cameras but all motor vehicle stops are recorded on a dashboard camera. His SUV cruiser also has built-in radar for speed enforcement and license plate readers that can alert him to a stolen or unregistered vehicle.

He likes to keep busy and take a proactive approach to patrol work. Seemingly routine

moment's notice.

They check local businesses if the night is slow to make sure the doors are locked and nothing seems amiss. They also keep an eye on the all-night gas stations and convenience stores to make sure the workers are safe.

"It's not that busy on midnights in Wethersfield, that's

anything of value overnight in an outdoor vehicle, he said.

One common factor between the two locales is that people in general seem to take drugs and driving while impaired less seriously than in the past. He attributes that, at least in part, to the decriminalization of marijuana.

His experience has been that more people seem to think it's OK to drive a car after smoking pot, yet that can be just as dangerous as drinking and driving.

Holton talked about a recent day when he was doing his field training at the intersection of Prospect Street and Griswold Road. His cruiser was pulled over to the side but the car behind refused to pass, even when instructed to do so.

That seemed rather odd to him. So he stopped the vehicle and discovered that the driver was a young man who was high on drugs and also had illegal narcotics in the car.

The increase in the use of heroin and the dangerous additive fentanyl are a nationwide problem and crosses geographic, ethnic, socioeconomic and all other barriers, he added. **WL**

"I'm amazed. It's like there's an invisible shield between Wethersfield and Hartford."

– Officer Rich Holton

motor vehicle stops can lead to greater actions such as the seizure of illegal drugs or discovery of a wanted felon, among others.

"You make it what you want," he said of working a patrol shift. "Hartford was a lot of stress. Police work is stressful in general."

Medical emergencies and car crashes can happen at anytime of the day or night. Another somewhat common call on the overnight shift is business break-ins. Officers must be ready to respond at a

for sure," Holton said.

"You learn by experience. The biggest adjustment is getting used to different radio codes and department policies. The biggest thing I've learned so far is how that border is there."

He scratches his head over the fact that some residents leave their cars in the driveway overnight, unlocked, and with valuables inside. Then they seem genuinely surprised when these items are stolen. No one in Hartford would ever leave

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News roundup

Register for fall sports

Wethersfield High School fall sports registration and tryout information will be distributed via email to students and parents at the end of July. Online registration begins Aug. 1.

Athletes must complete the entire registration process prior to the first day of practice or workouts and are expected to attend all tryout dates and times. Initial information can be found at wethersfield.k12.ct.us.

Town collects school supplies

The town of Department of Social and Youth Services is holding its annual School Supplies Program from 2-5 p.m. Aug. 17 in the Town Council Chambers at Town Hall. Only parents or guardians will be allowed to “shop” for children entering kindergarten through high school.

Families must be Wethersfield residents and must provide a current utility bill in their name to prove residency. For more information call 860-721-2977 and ask to speak with Erica Texeira or Christina Morra-Tiu.

Donations will be gratefully accepted. Recommended items include filler paper, pocket folders, scissors, post-it notes, erasers, three-ring binders, new backpacks, notebooks, markers, pencil boxes, colored pencils, index cards, lunch boxes, glue sticks and flash drives.

Correction

A story in last month’s issue reversed the first names of two leaders of the Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance Association. Dennis McMahon is chief of the WVAA and Kevin Clark is assistant chief of operations. **WL**



11 Critical home inspection

Traps to be aware of before listing your Wethersfield home

WETHERSFIELD - Newmarket - According to industry experts, there are over 33 physical problems that will come under scrutiny during a home inspection when your home is for sale. A new report has been prepared which identifies the eleven most common of these problems, and what you should know about them before you list your home for sale. Whether you own an old home or brand new one, there are a number of things that can fall short of requirements during a home inspection. If not identified and dealt with, any of these 11 items could cost you dearly in terms of repair. That’s why it’s critical that you read this report before you list your home. If you wait until the home inspector flags these issues

for you, you will almost certainly experience costly delays in the close of your home sale or, worse, turn prospective buyers away altogether. In most cases, you can make a reasonable pre-inspection yourself if you know what you’re looking for, and knowing what you’re looking for can help you prevent little problems from growing into costly and unmanageable ones. To help homesellers deal with this issue before their homes are listed, a free report entitled “11 Things You Need to Know to Pass Your Home Inspection” has been compiled which explains the issues involved. To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your FREE copy of this report call toll-free 1-800-597-7893 and enter 1003. You can call any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

This report is courtesy of Sanam Solati Yurczyk, REALTOR®, EXIT Realty Black Rock. Not intended to solicit properties already listed for sale.

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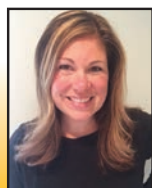
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George Agnelli, Jr., owner of Agnelli Real Estate, announced the affiliation of Maureen Horowitz to the firm. "We are thrilled to have Maureen on our team," stated Mr. Agnelli. "Her 15 years of experience in real estate and her dedication to her clients and community are assets to our agency."

Maureen achieved the designations of Accredited Buyer Representative, Graduate, Realtor Institute and Seniors Real Estate Specialist. As a top producer, Maureen has been a consistent award winner, earning many local and national awards.

A life-long resident of Wethersfield, Maureen graduated from Wethersfield High and Central Connecticut State University. She and her husband are proud parents of Hannah who excelled in the Wethersfield public school system. Maureen has always been active in the community. A volunteer with the Wethersfield Beautification Trust since 1996, Maureen has planted and maintained many gardens throughout town. As a Director of the Wethersfield Dollars for Scholars since 2008, Maureen has helped raise and award thousands of dollars in scholarships. She also serves as a Director of the Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce and volunteers with the Wethersfield Historical Society.

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John comes to William Raveis Real Estate with over 23 years of experience and has been a Wethersfield resident for many years. He attended Wethersfield High, Central Connecticut State University and then went into the Air Force for 4 years serving in Vietnam.

John continually educates himself to help serve his clients in the most professional way. He has earned his e-Pro designation, became a Senior Real Estate Specialist, Accredited Buyer Representative and is a Graduate of Realtor Institute.

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Please take a minute to welcome John. He can be reached at 860-983-4427 or JohnGerardi@raveis.com.



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Photos by Mark Jahne

Owen Clarke created this artwork in a preschool class. It got his father thinking about making a career change from teaching to selling ice cream.

“People are really happy that a local family took it over. Everyone has been very supportive and very excited.”

– Kathy Clarke



Michael and Kathy Clarke of Old Wethersfield are the new owners of Main Street Creamery. Their children Owen, Jack and Lilly help out around the shop.

A SWEET change of career

Clarke family purchases the Main Street Creamery

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Michael Clarke was looking for a change of careers. So he decided to make it as sweet a change as possible.

He taught for the past several years at Windsor High School but wanted to try something completely different. His wife Kathy is the facilitator of the alternate education program at the same school.

So the couple decided to follow their taste buds and the result is that they are the new owners of the Main Street Creamery on Main Street in Old Wethersfield. They live just down the street.

Kathy grew up in Newington and Michael is originally from White Plains, N.Y. They moved to town five years ago. When they heard that previous owner Paula Rubinow was looking to sell, they jumped at the opportunity.

The couple has three children and son Owen apparently had a premonition of what was to come back when he attended the nearby Rainbow Center for Children & Families preschool.

The students were asked to make a drawing of what they wanted to do when they grew up and he crafted a picture of an ice cream truck.

“He always wanted to be an ice cream man,” his father said.

That got his parents thinking.

“I started looking around for old trucks a couple of years ago,” Michael said. “Then I heard this place was up for sale.”

He purchased an old International Harvester just in case he ever wants to take the business on the road.

“Over the years, Kathy has talked me out of numerous business ideas,” he said as she sat alongside, smiling.

But not this time. They agreed to take the plunge and became the new owners May 23, just in time for a busy and profitable Memorial Day weekend. They retained the previous staff, including Manager Aimee Wood, and are learning a great deal from them.

“She’s been here for 11 years and she’s really been helping me run things,” Michael said.

Kathy is helping out over the summer, as well as handling the store’s social media presence, and will return to her job at Windsor High in the fall. It’s a true family business so the children all have tasks to perform at the store as well.

“I’m an outside the box kind of thinker,” she said.

“People are really happy that a local family took it over. Everyone has been very supportive and very excited,” she added.

“It’s important for us to keep this a good shopping place for our neighborhood,” Michael said.

The shop still offers special functions such as birthday parties and bridal showers. The Clarks made it a point to retain most of the more than 50 ice cream flavors with which people are familiar but they are trying out some seasonal flavors using locally grown fruit.

He’s looking to partner with local vendors and is already offering specially roasted coffee from Daybreak in Glastonbury. They also want to form partnerships with schools and other organizations.

In keeping with the times, Main Street Creamery is offering dairy-free, sugar-free and gluten-free products.

“There has been an increased interest in the dairy-free options we have,” Michael said. “Our soft-serve is all lactose free.”

These products are made with cashew milk and/or soy milk. They offer vegan options, too.

“We are going to start doing some more foods” in addition to ice cream, starting with waffles, he said.

The creamery also retains its dog-friendly atmosphere. A water bowl awaits thirsty canines outside, along with some treats. The store sells Pup Cups, special non-dairy desserts specifically designed for consumption by man’s best friend.

Clarke said he’s putting in a lot of hours but doesn’t mind it as long as he can still find time for his wife and children. It helps that they regularly spend time at the store.

“It is fun already. I enjoy the change,” he said. **WL**

August calendar

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

3 **Teen Movie “Beauty and the Beast,”**
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Deane Highway, 860-257-2811 or wethersfield-
library.org

7 **Dollars for Scholars Golf Outing,**
11:30 a.m., Wethersfield Country Club, 860-
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12 **Saturday Cinema, “The Defiant
Ones,** 1:30 p.m., Wethersfield Library, 515
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wethersfieldlibrary.org

150 Prospect Coffeehouse, 6:30 p.m.,
Wethersfield United Methodist Church, 150
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Back to School

Looking ahead

at

fall fashion trends

Hot looks for when
the weather cools down

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer



As summer starts to wind down, back-to-school shopping begins to ramp up.

According to a survey from the National Retail Federation, back-to-school spending in 2017 is expected to reach \$83.6 billion, a ten percent increase from last year's \$75.8 billion.

"It's the second biggest selling season for retailers next to the holidays," Westfarms spokesperson

Amanda Sirica said. "We will see a huge spike in back-to-school shopping during Connecticut's tax free week, which begins Sunday, August 20 through Saturday, August 26."

Along with sales of school supplies, electronics and shoes, back-to-school shopping often has a great emphasis on clothes.

"There's something very exciting and exhilarating about fall and a chance for kids to start fresh, and with that comes a fresh new wardrobe," Sirica said.

For those who may be daunted by all the styles in stores, here are some of the trends that will be making a splash this fall.

"Denim is always a staple of back to school shopping and this year is no exception," Sirica said. "It's actually bigger than ever."

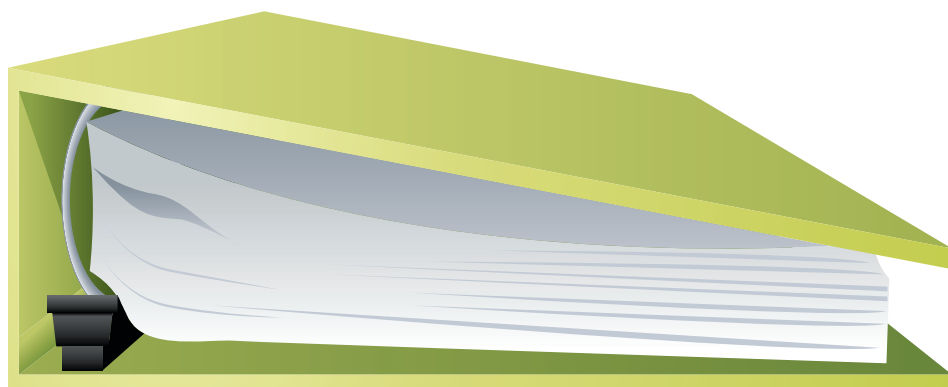
For women and girls, many styles will now include embroidered denim as well as one of the bigger trends of the season – patches and appliques.

"For girls right now there is a lot

of patches, and they're putting them everywhere," Susan Macko, owner of LemonLlama Kids' Boutique in Avon said. "They're on jeans as well as outerwear or tunics and tops."

The style of these patches can range from rainbows and butterflies to a variety of emojis, which both Macko and Sirica said are very popular this year.

Along with appliqued and embroidered denim, shoppers can also expect to see more high-waisted jeans in stores.



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Back to School



"You're also going to see colored denim making a comeback and high-waisted jeans," Sirica said.

Part of what is contributing to this style is a resurgence in trends from the 1970s.

"We're seeing a subtle '70s trend coming back," Sirica said. "Last year was the '80s and now we're seeing this subtle '70s revival. Some of the things we're seeing contribute to that are two-tone denim and body suits."

Along with that '70s style is the continuation of all things boho.

"Bohemian is still trending," Macko said. "That was strong last year and that's still around."

Macko and Sirica said shoppers can expect to see flowing dresses and tops for girls and women.

"Those styles look incredible paired with cargo or denim jackets," Sirica said.

Also continuing into the fall is a style known as 'athleisure,' which Sirica said is still "going strong."

"That's when you mix and match athletic wear with everyday wear," she explained. "You may have a performance Under Armour top with a denim skirt, or just wearing a full athletic outfit as everyday wear."

For many shoppers, the fabric used is an important part of any outfit.

"In general for the kids, it's all about the fabric and feel and the softness of it. That's why fleece is always so popular," Macko said.

As the days begin to grow colder, Macko said that this season will see a growing trend of fur, either faux or real, as well.

"We're seeing a lot of fur-trimmed hoods and vests," she said. "There are fur pom-poms everywhere. Some of the fur is natural, some of it's dyed, but hats for infants through adults seem to have either real or faux fur pom-poms."

Another fabric choice Macko said is popular this season is metallic.

"In general, metallics are popular, especially gold metallics," she said. "You'll probably see it in dresses and sweaters this season."

In addition to shoppers being concerned with a fabric's feel and look, many are also concerned with how it was made.

"Some of our retailers have started making eco-friendly lines," Sirica said. "They're coming out with clothes that are made from recycled materials, like bottles, and turned into textiles."

Companies such as H&M have started producing these environmentally conscious clothing as well as JCPenney's Arizona Jeans line, which now has nearly 28 percent of their textiles made from recycled materials.

For those who may be overwhelmed by the task of back-to-school shopping, both Macko and Sirica said that it can be a positive experience, both for shoppers and their wallets.

"It seems like a daunting task, but it does not have to be," Sirica said. "Westfarms has parents covered with back to school sales, and you can see online or on our new app what's on sale before you head out to the mall."

Whether heading out to a large department store or staying small at a boutique, back-to-school shopping can be pleasant for everyone.

"We always have things that are different that you don't find everywhere," Macko said. "There are price points for everyone and we always have sale items. It's a nice mix so that everybody can find something." **WL**

LemonLlama Kid's Boutique is located at 29 East Main Street, Avon. They can be reached at 860-678-7087 or online at www.lemonllamakids.com. Westfarms Mall is located at 1500 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford. For more information, call 860-561-3024 or visit www.shopwestfarms.com.



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Back to School

Dorm days

Prepping to make the most of a small space

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer



With the start of school comes a brand new chapter for many young people who are moving out of their family homes and into a dormitory.

For those looking to spruce up the small space beyond the standard issue dresser and twin bed, local retailers

have a variety of options.

“As far as college students going back to school, we have all types of items in our store,” Sheri Jackson, owner of Gillette Furniture Consignment in Wethersfield, said.

Those preparing to live in a small space should think about finding items that make good use of an area.

“We have a Crate and Barrel lad-

der shelf that’s something that, if you don’t have a lot of room, is a nice piece,” Jackson said.

To best utilize space, students can look for under bed storage, however Jackson also suggested finding pieces that can do double duty.

“They can get something like a storage ottoman so they can use it both for storage and as a coffee table,”

Jackson said.

Students can also find pieces that can fold away or be hidden when not in use. “If they’re doing a small apartment, we have a two-seater drop side table,” Jackson said. “They can pull up the sides and use their laptop or eat on it with a friend.”

By shopping consignment, students may be able to find unique items

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Back to School

that will make their dorm room stand out.

According to Jackson, shopping for dorms at a consignment store, such as Gillette Furniture Consignment, is also ideal for those not looking to break the bank.

"We offer quality, condition and style and I try to have something to hit everybody's price point," Jackson said. "This isn't just old, used furniture. This is quality items at a good price."

At her store, much like for many young people, remaining eco-friendly is a priority.

"We're very earth-friendly," she said. "We're always being conscientious and recycling."

Along with furnishing dorm rooms with shelves and extra storage space, being away from home also gives students the opportunity to decorate however they wish.

"We get a lot of kids coming in here to decorate their dorms," Geraldine Talge, owner of The

Chalkboard in West Hartford, said. "They'll usually have a theme going on that they want to do."

While The Chalkboard is typically thought of as a teacher supply store, Talge said that each fall she gets an influx of college students who find creative ways to repurpose the items they find.

One of the biggest sellers she finds for college-bound students are decorative papers and boarders.

"It makes whatever you're putting up look so nice," Talge said. "They do a lot with decorating dorms."

Early in the year, Talge said she sees many students looking to create welcome signs and banners, but as the year progresses, students will return to create new themes for different holidays or celebrations.

"We do sell a lot of inspirational posters as well," Talge said.

For those looking to use this change of scenery as a way to get organized, The Chalkboard also

offers a variety of items to make desk space clean and efficient with folders, notebooks and shelf organizers.

"The first thing I would suggest is a calendar," Talge said. "That's always a great thing to have to stay on top of everything."

When moving into a new space, especially a tiny room, it's important to think creatively to best utilize the space, but additionally it's also important to simply enjoy the new adventure.

"It's just fun when the kids come in because they're always enthusiastic," Talge said. **WL**

Gillette Furniture Consignment is located at 32 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield. They can be reached at 860-436-4663 or online at www.gillettefurnitureconsignment.com.

The Chalkboard is located at 1126 New Britain Ave., West Hartford. They can be reached at 860-236-0044 or online at www.chalkboardct.com.

"The first thing I would suggest is a calendar. That's always a great thing to have to stay on top of everything."

—Geraldine Talge

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Living *your Best* LIFE

Why sit still?

Dorcas McHugh has always jumped in to make a difference

by Mark Jahne
Editor

age. She's slowing down just a little but has no desire to simply sit on the sidelines and watch the world go by.

One of five sisters born to Irish-American parents, she recalled coming to town with her late husband Jim more than 60 years ago. She grew up in the South End of Hartford and he hailed from

the city's Frog Hollow neighborhood. It wasn't long before she was looking to become involved even though she was raising three daughters of her own, the youngest of whom was born when McHugh was 40.

"I got involved with the Junior Woman's Club. That's what the young mothers did," she said.

That led to volunteer work at Corpus Christi Church, including its school, which her children attended. She joined the church's women's club, too. McHugh recalled a household goods shower she helped to plan for the nuns who taught at the school.

"We filled the whole gym. There was an overwhelming response," she said.

The McHughs were front and center when the Archdiocese of Hartford decided to create a new parish out of the southern and western sections of town. The Church of the Incarnation, built in

If there is a social or civic event in town, chances are good that Dorcas McHugh is somewhere in the crowd. It's been that way since she came here more than six decades ago.

McHugh, an unabashed cheerleader for her beloved Wethersfield, is still keeping busy at 83 years of

**"I loved being town clerk.
It's a people-oriented office."**

– Dorcas McHugh

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Living your Best LIFE

the 1960s and where she still worships, became a significant part of her life.

"We met Father [John] Crawford before the church was built," she recalled.

Crawford was the founding pastor and was excited about leading the new parish. The first challenge he faced was that he had people, but no church. Where would they worship?

Jim McHugh, who worked for the town, contacted various town government and school district officials. An agreement was reached that the parish would rent what was then the Webb Junior High School auditorium on Sunday mornings until its new church on Prospect Street was built and approved for occupancy.

Dorcas McHugh spent many years using her gardening and floral skills to help decorate the church for the holidays and also joined its woman's club. She was a

member of the Village Garden Club, too.

Over the years she became involved in other local groups including the Wethersfield Historical Society, where she continues to serve on its advisory board, Wethersfield Tourism Commission and Economic Development and Improvement Commission. She recently resigned from those two posts.

Community involvement has long been her passion. One of her favorite memories is her role in helping to bring the abandoned old school that is now the Kenney Memorial Cultural Center back to life.

"I'm so proud of the Keeney," she said. "It was an empty school. It was a very small [historical] society with almost no budget."

Emma Keeney offered to provide \$200,000 toward a museum and cultural center in memory of her son, Ensign Robert Allan

Keeney, who perished when the USS Indianapolis was torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine just weeks before the end of World War II. There was divided opinion among members of the historical society board over whether the group should undertake such a large project.

One suggestion was to refurbish the building one room at a time but that was nixed by the late Thomas Lasher, an advocate for people with disabilities such as himself, who insisted that it should all be done at once and brought into handicapped access compliance at the same time with the installation of an elevator, McHugh recalled.

The decision was made to move forward and she helped to lead the fund-raising effort by reaching out to businesses and other local organizations. They sold naming rights to the various rooms to encourage

larger contributions.

"It took us 10 years and we raised \$1.3 million. We didn't raise it from within the historical society, we raised it from businesses," McHugh said. "It's exciting to see something come together" that benefits the entire town.

"Everything I have done I enjoyed."

McHugh served four years as a member of the Town Council in the 1960s and later worked 16 years as town clerk.

"I loved being town clerk. It's a people-oriented office. I used to call it the open door to town hall," she said.

Residents would come to her seeking assistance and information about all aspects of town government. The job allowed her to interact with the entire community over a diverse number of items such as marriage licenses, property transfers, fishing and hunting licenses, dog licenses and more.

She was asked why she chose



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Living your Best LIFE

to step down from the Tourism Commission and EDIC. The simple answer is that she wants to slow down the pace of her life a little bit. She also looks forward to seeing her seven grandchildren with more frequency.

"I decided it was time to move on and let some of the younger people come in," McHugh said.

Peter Gillespie, the town's director of economic development and planning, is sad to see her go.

"She was a valuable asset and contributor. It's just in her nature. She's a phenomenal cheerleader for Wethersfield," he said.

"I've known her for about 28 years," Kathy Bagley said.

She heads both the departments of parks and recreation and social and youth services for town government. She praised McHugh for being someone who always offers to help and said they have become good friends.

"She loves the community. She truly believes in always wanting to make it better," Bagley said. "I've always thought about Dorcas as a classy lady. She's a warm and giving person. She knows everybody in town." **WL**



Dorcas McHugh has long been active in all types of civic and nonprofit activities.

Photo by Mark Jahne

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People notes



Leah Casanelli

Leah Casanelli earned a bachelor of science degree in nursing from Pensacola Christian College. She was also named to the dean's list.

Marena Connors and **Alyssa Hammond** were named to the dean's list at Tunxis Community College.

Iwona Drozdal was accepted into the Alpha Iota Alpha Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at Tunxis Community College.

The following residents were named to the honor roll for the fourth quarter marking period at Mercy High School. First honors: **Haley Lombardo, Olivia Porriello, Maggie Silbo** and **Vanessa Slack**. High honors: **Montana Andrea, Mia Carbone, Molly Codeanne, Grace Marino, Sarah Ritter, Nicole Roode, Annmarie Rotatori, Mary Alistair Vidallon** and **Yue Yin**.

Ashley Arriaga, Mirela Dautovic, Jonathan Gwara, David Huffman, Zachary Leveton, Aimee Marone, Chrissy Pikos, Debbie Plourde, Chris Stek, Janet Tedone, Dzenana Uvalic, Ashley Wengzn and **Brandie Williams** were named to the president's list at Goodwin College.

Grace Alpert, Rachel Lombardi, Mario Marena and **Carissa Peckrul** were named to the dean's list at Roger Williams University.

Sara Aguilar, Alvi Aliaj, Demi Arroyo, Michael Barry, Stephanie Beers, Angela Bell, Ryan Biggs,

Bianca Bobadilla, Heather Ciarletto, Lillian Ciarletto, Adam Clark, Claire Copeland, Jessica Dupont, Robert Fabian, Olivia Fenton, Kacey Friedman, Kaitlin Glynn, Michael Gomez-Hixson, Yoldalis Gutierrez, Brandon Johnson, Cameron McFarlane, Sydney Mercier, Daniella Minichino, Ethan Morris, Arva Nerenxa, Jude Nwaogu, Daniel Purinton, Michaela Ranniello, Delia Rondinelli, Alexandra Saharek, Tea Morin-Scata, James Slayton, Alexander Tremblay, Eric Wright and **Gabriela Zglej** were named to the dean's list at the University of Hartford.

Nancy Glynn was named to the dean's list at Central Connecticut State University.

Kelsey Duffy was named to the dean's list at the College of the Holy Cross.

Fiona Dunn was awarded a scholarship by PEO Chapter U.



John Lynch Jr.

John Lynch Jr. was appointed to the board of directors of the Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity. He is a member of Robinson+Cole's Business Transactions and Finance Practice Groups and chairman of the firm's Diversity Committee.

Griffin Latulippe graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology with a B.S./M.S. degree in physician assistant. **WL**

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FLIPPING *into first*

Girl goes for the gold in gymnastics competitions

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

While some 13-year-olds spend their time trying to decide what they want to do, Adele Hong is already winning championships. The incoming eighth-grader at Silas Deane Middle School is working to become an accomplished gymnast.

"It's fun. It's just something I love," she said.

The road to gymnastics began early in life for Adele, said her mother, Jennifer Hong.

"When she was 18 months old she learned how to climb out of her crib and into her sister's crib," Hong

said with a laugh. "We decided she needed a better outlet than that."

Adele began taking gymnastics at age 2 and started competing around seven years ago through American Gymnastics in Plantsville.

"The coaches invited her from classes to join pre-team and she just moved up through the levels from there," Hong said.

The pre-team classes are the first step toward competitive gymnastics. Students move up through levels from three to 10 based on their abilities and the coaches' recommendations to move forward.

"Pre-team is when you learn the routines for level three and get ready



Adele Hong

Photo by Lisa Brisson

to move to level three," Adele said.

Since that time, she has continued to pursue her passion and is now competing as a level seven, training for level eight. She is currently on the Junior Olympics team at her gym competing in all four areas: vault, uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise.

"My favorite is the bars," Adele said. "I do all four at every event and meet, but I like the uneven bars."

During the school year Adele practices four days per week from 4:30 to 7:45 p.m. as well as Saturdays for three and a half hours. Her mother said that she is extremely proud of how her daughter can attend all of

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those practices and still maintain her academic status on the honor roll.

"Keeping up with my school work can be hard, but my teammates are really supportive," Adele said.

In addition to pushing herself in her schoolwork, Adele has been known to push herself for her sport as well. She recently mastered the Yurchenko Vault, a level eight maneuver that she began practicing as a level seven.

"It's a round-off and then a back handspring off of the springboard onto the vault and then you flip off," Adele explained. "I was doing drills of it over the summer last year."

She has hit a few obstacles throughout her years of training. She cut off the tip of her finger four years ago while adjusting some equipment and just last year she stressed the growth plates in her wrists.

"She had to take three or four months off from anything that would involve her wrists," her mother said. "Even so, she still went to the gym, she just had to find other ways to tumble."

That dedication to her sport has earned Adele regional recognition. This year she was accepted onto the regional team consisting of some of the best gymnasts from all over New England and New York.

Adele competed in March at the state level meet held at Trinity College in Hartford. She placed first in her age group for her floor routine and fourth place overall.

"She got sixth place on the bars for that one, but somehow the bars were assembled upside down, so who knows how it would have been had they been set up properly," Hong said.

With an all-around score of 36.825, Adele was qualified to move forward to the regional competition in April at the Mass Mutual Center in Springfield, Mass. She finished in first place in both bars and vault, third place on balance beam and fifth place on her floor routine. Her 37.65 all-around score led to her placing first for her age group.

For level seven, the regional competition is the furthest a gymnast can progress. Adele said she is already looking forward to becoming

a level nine, which can compete in Eastern Nationals, and eventually a level 10, which can compete in Nationals.

"Hopefully I'll be a level eight this fall," she said.

Her team is called the Junior Olympics team but her plans are not necessarily to compete at the Olympic level. She hopes to continue gymnastics and compete in college, but after that she wants to become a coach.

"They're such a big part of a gymnast's life," she said. "The coaches I've had have helped me so much."

For now, Adele is happy to continue learning and growing as a gymnast and using her skill to give back when she can. In recent years, she has attended the Pink Invitational in Philadelphia, a gymnastics tournament to raise funds for breast cancer research.

"My grandma is a breast cancer survivor so it's important to me," Adele said.

Last year, her gym raised more than \$16,000 for the Pink Invitational. They're now working to raise \$2,000 for the Smilow Cancer

Hospital at Yale-New Haven.

"Adele did a lot of personal fundraising toward the gym total," Hong said.

The Pink Invitational also gives gymnasts further opportunities to raise money during the event itself.

"If you score a 9.0 or higher, you put a ribbon onto the boundary of the competition area and for each ribbon that's tied on, they donate a dollar," Adele said. "I got to tie on four ribbons."

She may be the most recognized gymnast in her house but she is not the only active one. Her twin sister Emma is a cheerleader while her younger siblings, 10-year-old twins Jacqui and Xander, are a gymnast and soccer player, respectively.

"She's really good and I wanted to do what Adele does," Jacqui said, calling her sister helpful.

As the summer continues, Adele is focused on working toward becoming a level eight gymnast and excited to continue competing.

"I get nervous, but also excited," she said. "I like being able to show people what I can do." **WL**

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Events *spotlight*



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This year mark's the 20th annual afternoon of golf to benefit Wethersfield Dollars for Scholars, founded in 1975. The day starts with lunch at 11:30 a.m. and tee off at 12:30 p.m. After finishing on the links, golfers will enjoy dinner, along with raffle prizes and various awards. The cost is \$150 per golfer. Proceeds will be used to provide scholarships to Wethersfield residents going on to post-secondary education. For details contact Tim Tuell at 860-721-8526 or tuellcpa@cox.net or Lori Willin at 860-563-6929 or teachlw17@gmail.com.

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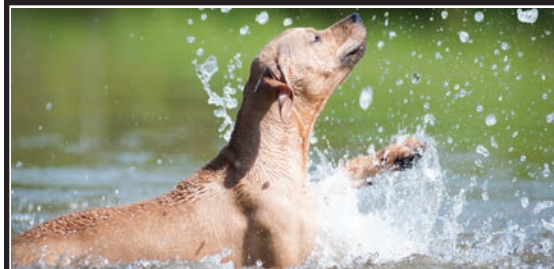


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Editorial

It's as different as night and day

A recently retired Hartford police sergeant decided he still enjoyed working in law enforcement. So he joined the Wethersfield Police Department.

Sure, it meant having no seniority and going back to working the overnight shift. But it was an opportunity to do what he enjoys, which is to help people by assisting them at their most difficult moments and otherwise keeping them safe.

The transition from Hartford to the town right next door was not expected to be all that difficult. Police work is police work wherever you go, it's the severity and the volume of calls that are different.

But as he drove along the Berlin Turnpike one night while on patrol the light atop Travelers tower caught his eye. He was so close to his former professional "home" that he could see part of its skyline.

Yet he said he felt like he was a million miles away. It's as if the world completely changes when one crosses the invisible dotted line that separates the city from its immediate suburban neighbors.

The difference between Hartford and its suburbs is dramatic. Connecticut's capital city has a much higher level of poverty and lower per capita income than its surrounding municipalities. The quality of life is not the same. City government is scrambling

to avoid bankruptcy.

The officer noted that one of things he finds in the suburbs that makes him scratch his head is the fact that some people leave their cars in the driveway overnight unlocked and with valuables on the seat. Nobody in Hartford would ever take such a risk, he said.

People in towns such as Cromwell, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield generally feel safe. The majority of them support their local police.

In Hartford, he often found mistrust, if not overt opposition. There are many reasons for that. He found lots of good people, too, but they lived with a sense of unease because of the criminal elements that poverty breeds.

Hartford police run fast and hard all day long. Calls for service are received almost non-stop. It's not unusual for calls that do not involve immediate threat or harm to be backlogged until things quiet down a little bit, perhaps a day or two later.

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It's a much bigger issue than can be resolved here but, if Connecticut is to survive and thrive, how can it continue to allow Hartford and its other major cities to struggle with all of the challenges spawned by poverty while residents of suburbs right next door can trust that they will always enjoy safe neighborhoods and fiscally sound government? **WL**



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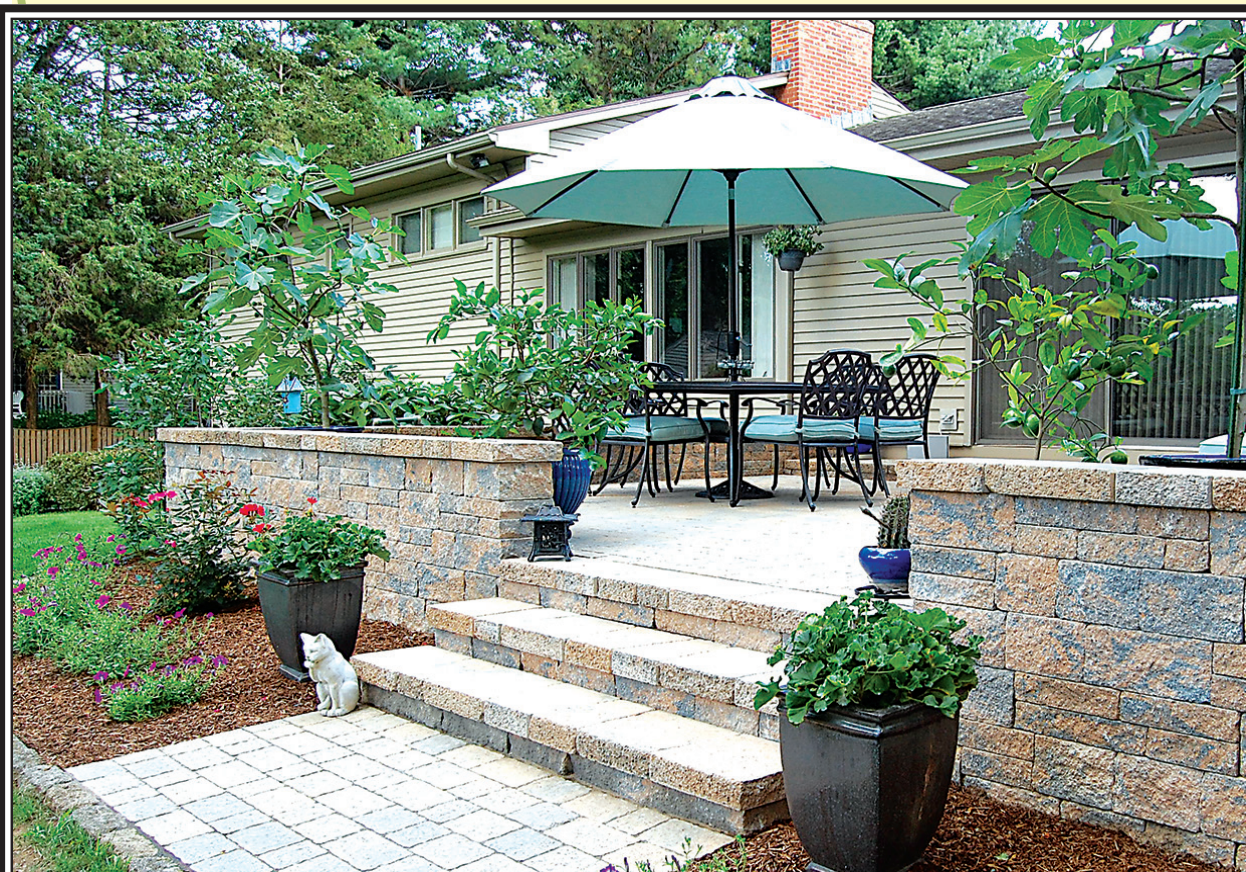
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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]



Solar Eclipse Time!

This month marks the first Total Solar Eclipse since 1979, for the contiguous United States. What is it, and what do you need to know? ...here are the details:

The event is happening on Monday, August 21st. As seen in the graphic, those from Oregon to South Carolina will be in the

path of totality (a path roughly 70 miles wide). This is where the moon passes directly between the sun and Earth, entirely blocking the sun for a matter of minutes – at the same time, casting the moon's shadow on Earth. The longest duration of the total eclipse is approximately 2 minutes and 40 seconds, when passing over Illinois!

Here in Connecticut, we will not see a “total” eclipse, but a “partial” one. This means the moon will only partially block the sun. On the 21st, for viewing from the Nutmeg State, the partial eclipse will begin around 1:25 p.m., reach its maximum point at 2:45 p.m. then end around 4 p.m. (lasting 2.5 hours, from start to finish).

Viewing will be weather permitting, of course. Furthermore, if visible, you will want to do so safely. Do NOT look directly at the eclipse. Using traditional sunglasses won't suffice, even if they're very dark. Instead, you will need special “eclipse glasses” that utilize a special-purpose solar filter. [WL](#)

MARK ZINNI & ERIN CONNOLLY

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